PRinT SCreen

The Newsletter for the Stanford/Palo Alto PC Users' Group

April 1990 Volume 8, Number 4

Here Comes the New Team!

CLUB NEWS

March Meeting

At last, we got to see IBM's OS/2, and it was well worth waiting for. The representative from IBM first discussed the major features of OS/2: its ability to multi-task and its graphical interface. And, if you purchase the Extended Edition, you get database management (the Query Manager) and communications (LAN and terminal emulation).

With OS/2, you can use up to 16 MB of RAM (instead of 640K in DOS) but still remain DOS-compatible. It gives you true multi- processing; you can process in the foreground and the background. The representative compared using DOS on a PS/2 with a truck driver driving a race car. By multi-tasking in OS/2, you can expect to gain 60-260% in productivity.

Though you can still type commands at a system prompt, you can also use the File Manager to manage your files graphically. File Manager is similar to Windows and uses the mouse. One of the nice features of File Manager is that you can print and display picture files without having to load a graphics software program.

To get the equivalent of a DOS prompt, you open an OS/2 window. Eighty-five percent of OS/2 commands are the same as DOS commands. Fortunately, the EDLIN line editor has been replaced with a modern, easy-to-use System Editor. To run OS/2, you need one of the following systems:

PS/2 (model 50, 60, 70, 80, or 30-286)
PC/AT
PC/XT-286
286 or 386 clone

You also need 12 MB of disk space.

April–May Calendar

April 23	Word SIG	7:30
April 25	Group Meeting	7:30
May 9	Windows Word SIG	7:30
May 14	Planning Meeting	7:30
May 30	Group Meeting	7:30

Next Meeting

Date: Wednesday, April 25
Time: 7:30 p.m.
Place: Polya Hall, Turing Auditorium (Rm. 111) Stanford University

All members are welcome to attend the monthly planning meeting, where we make decisions on the future of the group. Call Beverly Altman, 329-8252, for the location of the next meeting.

The Standard Edition ($340) requires 2 MB RAM and the Extended Edition ($830) requires 3 MB. With Presentation Manager, you need 5 MB of RAM (either edition).

Word SIGS

The next Microsoft Word SIG meeting will he held on April 23. One of the SIG leaders, Jan Altman, will demonstrate how to get the most out of the mouse with Word 5.0. Due to the Memorial Day holiday, the SIG may reschedule the May 28th meeting. Call Jan Altman at (408) 243-5955.

The new Word for Windows SIG meets the second Wednesday of each month. The guest speaker for the May 9th meeting will be a representative from InfoWorld magazine. The speaker will compare Word for Windows with its major competitor, Ami-Pro. Call Jan Altman for further information: (408) 243-5955.

Membership Renewals

For the two months preceding the expiration of your membership you will find a renewal envelope enclosed in your newsletter. Use this envelope to promptly send in your $25 check ($10 for students) so that you won't miss an issue of the monthly newsletter. A current membership card will be sent to you in PRinT SCreen.

Goodie Coupons

Remember, the "**Goodie Coupon**" attached to your membership card is presently good for one free disk: the library catalog, Disk of the Month, or a blank disk. Trade in your coupon for a disk at a future meeting.

This Month

Altman's Swan Song

This will be Rick Altman's last meeting as club president, and he's going to make sure that by the time the evening is over, you are sick of him. He will: 1) preside over the election of his successor; 2) show you a taste of yet another alternative operating environment (can't say which one); 3) if time permits, hold another Altman Auction (featuring incredible bargains); and 4) present the...

...Program of the Month

This month our Program of the Month features "The Best of SPAUG." This disk includes the favorite utilities that have been demonstrated throughout the years. The disk will include LIST, CED, BAC, FRONT, GLOBAL, LOCAL, NO, YES, MAYBE (whoops, got carried away there)—suffice it to say, some truly fabulous software. As always, the disk will be available for $1 or you may use your Goodie Coupon.

Floppy Disks For Sale

Xidex Precision disks are available for $5/box. High density floppies are $10/box (10 disks). The catalog and the Disk of the Month will be offered for $1 a disk. If you wish to purchase disks at the meetings, bring your membership card with you. ¶

Once More, With Feeling

by Rick Altman, Club President

The crisis is over, so I can write the kind of farewell column that I was hoping I would be able to: short, sweet, and cheerful.

Yes, we have candidates for both offices, as veteran Don Baird has thrown his trusty hat into the ring for president, and another upstart Altman, sister Jan, is vying for vice-presidency.

No guilt trips, no pleas, no admonitions. Yay! Instead, I get to look back on a very happy 12 months of my life, and smile about how this group played its part in my good cheer.

I'd like to think that I'm still young enough to mean it when I say that this club has been excellent training ground for me. In front of all of you, I learned how to control my nerves, control my thoughts, and in some small way, control an audience.

I learned that the most important quality of an officer of this type is not skill, not intelligence, not ambition. The most important skills are honesty and willingness. I said this last month, but most of you probably just thought it was a sales pitch.

Well, it was, but it was also the truth. If any of you decide to look back on my term with a degree of fondness, I hope that you will say something like, "Rick wasn't full of bull," or "He was always smiling."

Okay, enough sap—it's not like I'm going anywhere. I'll still do my share of demos, hold an auction or two, and offer up my share of wisecracks.

I must tell you that some of us in the Planning Committee wondered if the group would survive this mini-crisis. I'm delighted that our swan song is not being sung, yet at the same time, my successor Don won't feel any more comfortable than I have until the ranks of volunteers swell a bit. Why not make his job a bit easier and show up at a planning meeting? How about giving him and Jan a piece of your mind?

Whoops, I said that I wouldn't make any pleas. I'd better change the subject fast. What—you want to know what my favorite moment was? I'd say that my highlight and lowlight occurred on the same night. The Sidewalk Sale and Bob Viera's presentation of music software were my favorite moments. And they were sandwiched by St. Silicon, who agreed to come on for 15 minutes of humor and then wouldn't shut up. Nothing worked, including outright interruption. I never felt so helpless—oh, well.

A million thanks to all of you who made me feel at home as your president. I would look forward to a return visit to the podium in the future. Meanwhile, I'll see you in the stands, wisecracking as usual. ¶

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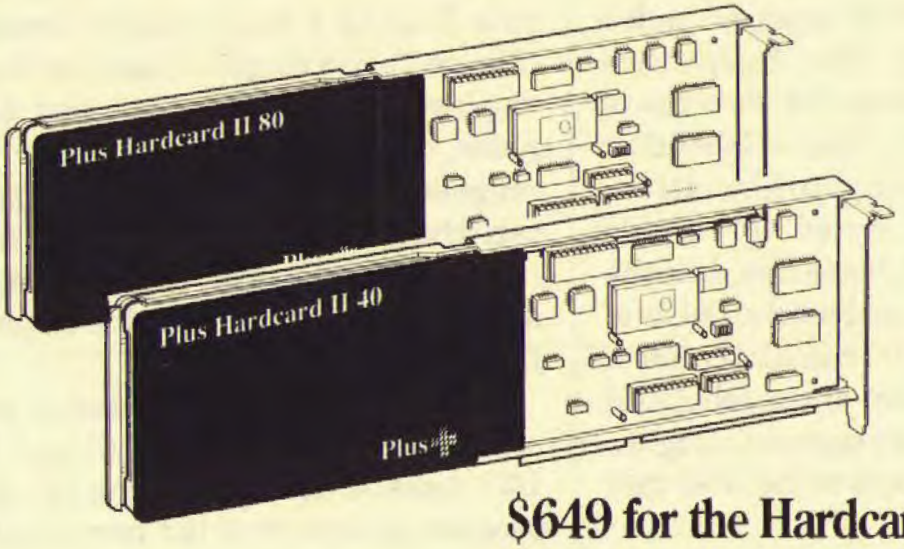

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HC-PC1

Name That Disk

This little utility can print it all!

by Becky Altman

At the ReliefWare Auction we had last November, I picked up a great little PowerUp! program called Name That Disk. This inexpensive utility program reads the contents of a floppy disk and prints a label that lists the following information: volume label, a sorted list of file names, bytes used, bytes free, date the label was printed, and total number of files on the disk. You can also create a title to go at the top of the label and type several lines of comments. Figure 1 displays an example of the label that you see on-screen.

Name That Disk offers several ways to display your files. You can sort the files by name, extension, or date. You have three formats for displaying your files: in a multi-column format (Figure 1), in a single-column list that displays the date next to each file name, or in a single-column list with comments next to each file name. You can choose not to display any file names at all, or use DOS wild cards (* and ?) to prevent specific file names from being listed.

Included in the box is a starter set of tractor-fed labels for 5-1/4" and 3-1/2" disks. One shortcoming of the program is that it is not compatible

This inexpensive utility reads the contents of a floppy disk, lists the volume label, a sorted list of file names, bytes used, bytes free, date the label was printed, and total number of files on the disk.

with laser printers. Many of the popular dot matrix printers are supported (Epson, Toshiba, Okidata, Panasonic, IBM). Because I have a laser printer and a dot matrix, I load the diskette labels in my Epson, and I keep them there on a permanent basis.

This program was a big timesaver for me as I wrote my book. My publisher requires its authors to label their disks with the chapter number, current date, name, the name of the book, what type of files were on the disk (manuscript or figures), and the type of word processor format the manuscript files were typed in. Some of this information is automatically displayed on the label. The other information I stored in a comment file, and simply retrieved it before printing the label. I typed the chapter number as the label title.

I also develop curriculum for several training companies and I give them the workbook and student data disk with nicely formatted labels. It's a nice touch that they appreciate.

Name That Disk is a simple program that doesn't do a heck of a lot, but what it does, it does well. I would recommend it for those who want to better-organize their floppy disks. ¶

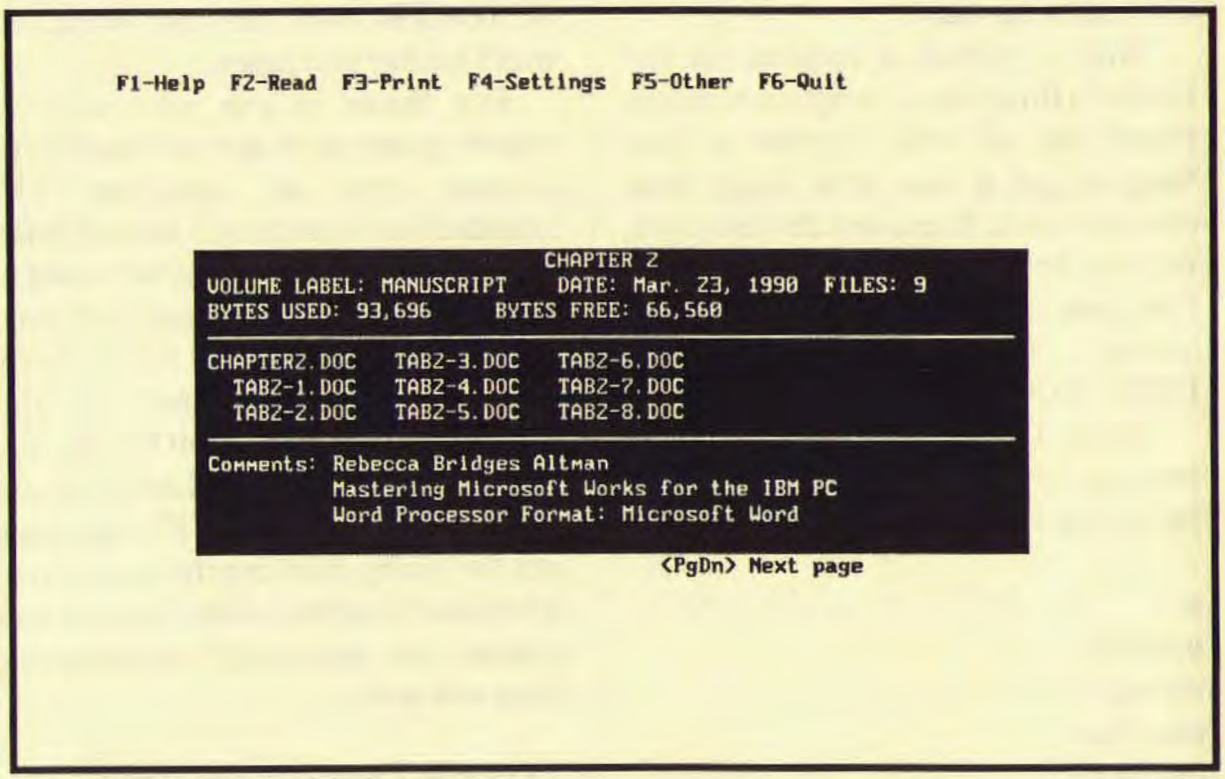

Figure One

Name That Disk shows you on-screen exactly what the disk label will look like. The label lists all the files contained on the disk (in alphabetical order, or any order you choose), the current date, total number of files, bytes used, and bytes free. You can also describe the disk with a title, volume label, and several lines of comments.

PRTSC POTPOURRI

NumLock Killer

R. Frazier
PCUG of the Redwoods

Does this happen to you? You have a 101-key keyboard and after booting the machine, you reach for the number pad expecting to find arrow keys and what do you get? A pile of digits crammed into your work. It's that $#%&*@! NumLock key again, toggled on by the BIOS whenever you boot your machine. Yea, I know, you've got a separate set of arrows, but old habits die hard.

Well, I posted a request on the Bulletin Board for a program to toggle NumLock off and, thanks to Don Magers, got a nice little utility that does the trick. Turns out the program, written by H. Arment, is so simple that you can make a copy yourself using the DOS program DEBUG.COM. Here's how:

Start DEBUG. At the DEBUG prompt (a dash) enter the following, including the blank line as shown.

```
a
push ds
xor ax,ax
mov ds,ax
mov si,417
mov al,[si]
and al,df
mov [si],al
pop ds
int 20
<Enter>
r cx
11
n numoff.com
w
q
```

You will have created a program called NUMOFF.COM. Try it out. At the DOS prompt, push the NumLock key so that the number pad puts out numbers (the LED status light will be lit). Then enter NUMOFF and, voila, the light goes out and the arrow keys are restored. Put NUMOFF in your AUTOEXEC.BAT file and NumLock won't bother you again.

For those of you who wonder what's going on, there is a keyboard status byte at location 417 hexadecimal in segment zero of RAM memory. One bit of this byte is used to show the state of the NumLock key. The others are used for Scroll Lock, Caps Lock, shift keys, Insert, Alt, and Ctrl. NUMOFF toggles off the bit corresponding to the NumLock key. As for the LED light, the BIOS takes care of it for you by checking the status byte whenever a keystroke is to be read and makes the necessary adjustment. Nice and neat!

Tips on Troubleshooting

Colorado PCUG

Murphy's law says your computer will act up when you need it most. The objective is to get it fixed as soon as possible. Here are some steps so you

can enjoy troubleshooting your computer, your printer, etc.

Calm down... Yelling at the computer won't work! The computer only speaks computerese. Don't hit the computer; that's not what we call being *user-friendly*.

Assess your situation... Rethink the procedure. Did you miss any steps? Rethink the problem. Is there another way to complete the project? Rethink your decision to use a computer for this project in the first place.

Check the obvious... Is there power in the outlet? Is the printer paper, ribbon and cable properly in place? If using a working copy of the software, did you copy all the files needed by the program?

Read the documentation... One third of all calls for technical support involve problems that are explained in the user's manual. Better yet, don't wait until you have a problem or do something wrong to read the instructions.

Boot the system... With the on/off switch—not your foot. Electronic equipment will flake-out on occasion due to cosmic rays, magnetic fields or witchcraft. These problems always disappear when you turn off the power. Only rarely do they reappear when the power is turned back on. But beware, unsaved data will be lost when you turn off the power.

Note that CTRL-ALT-DEL will not reset all problems. You'd better turn off the power instead. Always pause for ten seconds to let the electrons drain out completely before turning the power back on.

Analyze the problem... Has the problem occurred before? When was the last time the software or hardware worked properly? Has anything been added or moved since then? Has the problem grown progressively worse? Can you make the problem repeat itself? Well, don't do that again, silly.

Isolate the problem... Do you have the same problem when using other files and the same program or other programs and the same hardware? Redo the procedure using the other disk drive. Have someone else run it on his computer.

Be prepared when calling for help... If possible, jot down the model number of the hardware and the version number of the software involved. Explain your problem clearly. What are you trying to do? What is the hardware doing? What is the software supposed to do that it is not doing, what is it doing that it should not be doing and what are you doing that you weren't doing when everything worked? Remember, whatever you do...

Don't panic.

Compunition Quiz

Jyoti Panjwani
Bombay PCUG

Are you a power user? Take this quiz and find out. Don't cry to us if you fail—answers next month.

1. **Node**—(a) the physical location in a mass storage device allocated for use by a particular data set; (b) the point in a program which invokes

—see next page

Potpourri

from previous page

another program or subroutine; (c) a pulse that resets a magnetic cell in the storage section of a digital computer; (d) each terminal linked to a host CPU in a network.

2. **BUS**—(a) the mechanical device on which the printer head is placed; (b) the internal connection used to move data from one part of the computer to another; (c) a vehicle meant for transporting people; (d) a device that can collect messages from numerous terminals at the same time.

3. **Cache**—(a) a small pocket of data; (b) the storage area in a printer; (c) the internal connection used to move data from one part of the computer to another; (d) a small fast storage buffer integrated in the CPU.

4. **Verifier**—(a) a code for carrying out checks on fields; (b) a program for checking out syntax errors in other programs; (c) a program for checking card punching semi-mechanically; (d) a programmer who verifies data fore keying it into the computer.

5. **Time-sharing**—(a) sharing a computer watch; (b) cutting computer-use time to half; (c) more than one computer sharing one CPU clock; (d) simultaneous utilization of a computer system from multiple terminals.

6. **Auxiliary storage**—(a) a separate storage unit that supplements the CPU's primary storage; (b) a magnetic-tape memory in which a number of tapes are stored in a single housing; (c) data storage that allows recording of data without record for arrangement of fields; (d) the internal memory of a computer.

7. **Assembler program**—(a) a program made up of more than two subroutines; (b) a program that groups records for the purpose of processing them in a computer; (c) a program used for creating databases; (d) a program designed to convert symbolic instructions into machine language.

8. **Chaining**—(a)the process of linking up the CPU to a number of terminals; (b) the method of linking records in a database; (c) the method by which each bit is connected to another to form a data string; (d) a series-parallel combination of transistors.

9. **Encryption**—(a) the method of coding key fields to help in access of data; (b) the technique by which machine code is written onto ROM; (c) a scrambling technique which renders computer data unintelligible when interceptions occur; (d) to modify a program by inserting a machine language correction in an object deck.

10. **Exception report**—(a) report that contains hatch totals for validation purposes; (b) a list of records that do not fall within preestablished conditions; (c) report that contains a list of all invalid transaction entries made; (d) set of data items printed on the principle of first-in first-out. ¶

The SPAUG Resource Center

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